Fated Changes

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/36892252.

Rating:	Explicit
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Hannibal (TV)
Relationship:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter
Characters:	Will Graham, Hannibal Lecter, Mischa Lecter, Franklyn Froideveaux, Margot Verger, Mason Verger
Additional Tags:	Canon Universe, Single Parent Hannibal Lecter, Mischa Lecter is his Daughter, Will Graham is a cop, Psychiatrist Hannibal Lecter, Canon-Typical Violence, Hannibal Lecter is the Chesapeake Ripper, Hannibal Lecter is a Cannibal, Hannibal Lecter Loves Will Graham, Young Will Graham, (before he was a profiler/teacher), Dom/sub, Falling In Love, Manipulation, Dom Hannibal Lecter, Sub Will Graham, Smut, Porn With Plot, Mind Games, Dark Will Graham, Top Hannibal Lecter, Bottom Will Graham, Consensual Kink, Age Difference, brief discussion of sexual assault, past Will/Female relationships, Crying, Emotional Manipulation, Mommy Issues, Daddy Issues, Abandonment, Past Cheating, Embarrassment, Sexual Tension, Praise Kink, Masturbation, Hannibal Stalking Behavior, Non-Consensual Voyeurism, Wet Dream, Murder, Murder Fantasy, Fluff, Subspace, Implied/Referenced Sexual Assault, Blow Jobs, Cock Cages, Orgasm Delay/Denial, Anal Sex, Anal Fingering, Multiple Orgasms, Overstimulation, Size Kink, Dirty Talk, Feminization, Daddy Kink, Mason Verger is an asshole, Breeding Kink, Belly Bulge, Rape Fantasy, Consensual Non-Consent, Happy Ending, Happy Murder Family
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2022-02-05 Words: 8,180 Chapters: 1/18

Fated Changes

by whenitstarted

Summary

Hannibal Lecter is three things.
↠ A single father to his three year old daughter, Mischa.
↠ A psychiatrist.
↠ The Chesapeake Ripper.

And then he meets young cop Will Graham who is brimming with potential in all the ways that intrigue him, and realizes he may actually be a fourth thing.

↠ Obsessed, and potentially in love, with Will Graham.

Notes

welcome to my biggest hanni-baby !! please enjoy and leave your support, it means the world to me !! <3

I will add more tags as they come so keep a look out as chapters are added ~

Hannibal often finds himself lost in thought; taking note of the ingredients in his pantry for the week ahead, or planning who will next be added to the freezer in the basement are the typical places his mind wanders to. Mostly, this only takes him a few moments before he catches himself and slides his mask back into place.

Lately, there's been a few more causes for distraction as he's taken in two new clients at once — a man currently sat before him, wringing his hands and smelling of anxiety. Franklyn Froideveaux is someone he would not take the time to look at if he were to meet him on the street. Even given his after dark activities, Franklyn would not be someone he would consider for his table. He's a man dangerously dull, offering his mind to wander to his other new client.

Will Graham is quite unlike Franklyn — he's alarmingly interesting, and uncommonly sharp for a young police officer.

He's been seeing both of these men weekly for a month now, and while Hannibal would like to refer Franklyn to another psychiatrist so he would not have to put up with him and his blatant, desperate *interest* in Hannibal's life, that would offer up another time slot in his schedule. The probability of gaining another *Franklyn* is very low, which would leave him less time in the day to think about Will Graham. Priorities have been decided.

Hannibal flicks his eyes down to his watch, noting that it's not even eleven yet — over two more hours before his appointment with Will, which had been moved to his lunch break for this week.

Will's mind is somehow more captivating and intriguing than his beauty, and the conversations the two of them have shared in just a month's time — only four or so hours, really — has led Hannibal to the conclusion that the man could be like him, with a little time. He can feel for others so easily, can insert himself into another's mind as though it's his own, can detail exactly why the criminals he's hunting down would do the things they're doing. If not taken under his wing, Will Graham will turn into someone very gifted at finding people like Hannibal out.

Will Graham has a potential in him like no other he's seen; a longing behind his eyes.

The landline on his desk chiming loudly pulls Hannibal back into the room where Franklyn has stopped talking, now looking over to where the noise is ringing out.

"Do you—" he swallows, chin crumbling in a way Hannibal is far too used to witnessing, "do you need to get that?"

Hannibal rises, "give me just a moment."

Franklyn nods, and uses the wadded up tissue in his hands to dab under his eyes as Hannibal strides over to the phone, unlatching it from it's cradle.

“Hello?”

“Hi, is this Mr. Lecter?” A soft, nervous voice asks. One that Hannibal is quite familiar with, which keeps him from gritting his teeth and correcting her, *Dr. Lecter.*

“Yes, is everything alright Ms. Davis?”

There’s sound behind her, children giggling and playing freely. The distinct *thud* of a door closing, muffling the noise to nearly nothing.

“Actually, I just wanted to give you a heads up,” she says, pausing for a moment and quite obviously covering the receiver with her palm, indistinct whispering. Then, “Mischa has been complaining of her throat hurting this morning, and we checked her temperature and she’s a bit warm.”

Hannibal nods, checking his watch again. There’s a little break in the day to run home and have his lunch before Will’s appointment, but if he needs to pick her up, he will surely have to reschedule, which he would prefer not doing.

“How warm?”

“Just under a hundred, um, 99.8°,” she says, “our policy doesn’t state you need to come get her unless she hits 100.4°, but I knew you would rather know ahead of time in case it rises.”

Hannibal smiles, once again grateful for the teachers at his daughter’s preschool, “thank you for letting me know. I have a few more appointments in the day, but I will try and pick her up as soon as possible. Is she there with you now?”

“Yes, did you wanna talk to her?”

“Please,” Hannibal says, waiting a short moment while the phone is passed over.

“Daddy?”

“Hello, darling,” he pitches his voice differently, softening it and aiming to soothe, “you aren’t feeling well?”

“No,” she’s audibly pouting — something Hannibal has been dealing with since she learned just how powerful the move is.

“I’m sorry, honey. I’ll come get you and bring you home once I finish at work, alright?”

“‘Kay,” she breathes harder down the phone, voice pitiful when she speaks next, “you hurry?”

Hannibal’s heart is weak for only one — it painfully constricts in his chest, and he considers canceling all of his appointments for the rest of the week just for her comfort.

“I promise I’ll hurry,” he says, tapping his fingers against his desk top, “just a little longer. I love you.”

“I love you,” she murmurs back, and Hannibal waits to speak to the teacher again, but then there’s just the click of their phone hanging up followed by static down the line.

Chuckling, he sets his phone back in the cradle and turns back to Franklyn, “I apologize for the interruption.”

“Is your daughter sick?” He asks, eyes no longer wet. “Do you need to go get her? If you do, we can finish this later, Dr. Lecter.”

Hannibal contains the pleased smile that wants to spread across his face, instead wearing one of worry, shaking his head, “she is, but we can finish our session.”

“No, no, I’d hate to tie you up when there’s a family matter,” Franklyn is already standing, shoving his disgusting tissue into his pocket and pulling his jacket from the back of his chair. “Really, it’s alright.”

“You’re sure?”

Hannibal already knows he’s sure.

“Yes, I’ll get out of here, it’s no problem at all, Dr. Lecter,” he smiles, and Hannibal offers a polite one in return, more than pleased at this turn of events. Though he'd rather Mischa not be sick, she has inadvertently saved him from another half hour of pretending to be interested in Franklyn’s bland life.

“We will finish this at our next session,” Hannibal says, putting on his coat as if he really is going to leave right now to go pick her up. “I appreciate the compromise.”

Franklyn is a brown nose before anything else; seemingly his number one personality trait, really, so he scuttles out of the patient’s exit with a smile and a wave, and Hannibal locks the door swiftly behind him. He hangs his coat back up and moves back to his desk with the intent to email his afternoon patients with notice of rescheduling appointments. Before Mischa, he was pretty big on giving proper notice, but when half of your life is a three year old it gets quite unpredictable.

He leaves out Will Graham from the forwarding list. After going a week without hearing from the man, Hannibal is quite looking forward to seeing him again.

With time to kill, Hannibal settles into his desk to sketch until Will shows up for his appointment.

When he arrives a few minutes early, Hannibal takes in his appearance in the mirror he keeps in his desk before moving to let him into the office — he’s wearing his police uniform, which is something distractingly new to Hannibal.

It isn't wonderful that Will is starting out as a police officer, considering the plans Hannibal has of molding him with his own hands, but it isn't an impossible work around. If anything, he's already under the belief that Will joining the force was due to his own repressed nature that he's fighting against — it means he's already struggling with something dark within himself.

"Hey, Dr. Lecter," he smiles, self consciously adjusting his tie as Hannibal opens the door. Unfortunately, Hannibal thinks Will could suit just about anything he wore.

"Will," he opens the door wider, allowing him to enter. Will slips his jacket off, and Hannibal takes it immediately, moving across the room to hang it with his own — something he doesn't do for any other patient, but the selfish need to have Will's scent on his things overrides most parts of his brain. "How have you been, this week?"

"Fine," he shrugs, heaving down into his usual chair and kicking his foot up to prop his ankle on his knee. "It's been busy at work. S'weird to be here in the daylight, really."

"Yes, the change in schedule is odd," Hannibal comes to sit across from Will, having drawn their chairs purposefully closer after Franklyn left. "Do you have something planned for our usual time?"

"Oh, kind of," Will goes sheepish — his default look during sessions. "I'm going out with a few people from the station tonight for some drinks."

"Is that something you want to do?"

He shrugs again, "Bev asked, so it's mostly for her. I just don't like the whole *social* aspect of it. Other people, you know?"

"Yes, I understand," Hannibal smiles, distracted by the light shining off of Will's badge on his chest — it's upsetting how handsome he is in the outfit when Hannibal already thought he was stunning in a troublesome way in his casual clothes. "Is there a celebration that has you all going out?"

"Oh," Will shakes his head, cheeks going a little pink. He doesn't often look at Hannibal's eyes for very long, but it seems like he's purposefully avoiding them now.

"Oh?" Hannibal presses.

Pinker cheeks, and Hannibal is fighting the urge to ogle — it may be in part to Will's youth that he grows so flustered so easily, but Hannibal could take a guess that whatever he isn't saying has something to do with sex. It's endearing, really, that he can hardly speak about it. He wonders frequently if it's a defense mechanism, shame, or something else entirely that makes him so embarrassed.

"Just, well. Bev— it's not a celebration, really, just. An attempt to get laid, I guess," he says casually, like Hannibal isn't ripping teeth out to get an answer out of him.

But of course, he'd been right.

"For you, or for her?" He asks, delighting in the way Will squirms.

"Her, Doctor— her," he drops his leg to the ground and it bounces from there, an anxious tick.

"Is there a reason for it to *not* be for you?" Hannibal asks, leaning back in his chair and crossing his own legs. "You certainly don't strike me as the type of person who struggles in that area, Will."

Big, beautiful eyes flick up and meet Hannibal's for a moment, and he feels like he could stare into them for far longer than Will would ever allow.

"Hate to ruin the image you've got of me, but no, it's not really my scene."

"That's perfectly fine," Hannibal reassures him, trying not to let on *just* how much it pleases him that Will has a seemingly uncomfortable relationship with sex. It's not the time now, but a session down the line, Hannibal has already planned to use light therapy to try and delve a bit deeper into the man's mind when he's unable to guard it from him. "So you plan to just be a support system in it all?"

"You make it sound so formal, Hannibal," Will grins, finally loosening up a bit. It always takes a few minutes for him to warm back up to Hannibal, though they've been seeing each other for a month and above all else, have an almost friendship brewing. One that's carefully cultivated by Hannibal trying and succeeding in separating himself from the role of therapist. Always urging Will to be as casual as he wants with him, and it's clearly working in his favor. "I'm probably gonna just go out and have a beer or two and wait for an excuse to leave."

Hannibal laughs, endeared by Will's *homebody* persona — he knows it to be a fact how much Will dislikes human contact and schedule breaking. He recalls Will telling him that if he didn't have to work to pay for the roof over his head, he'd like to just stay at home and get really good at doing nothing.

Which, would work out swimmingly for Hannibal in the future, considering his overbearing need to take care of anything and everything.

The session evolves as usual with Hannibal doing all he can to worm himself closer to Will — he's already paved quite the way to the younger man, allowing free flowing trust to blossom between them with his honest disposition and assurance to Will that he thinks of them as something akin to *friends*.

After all, Will had only meant to see Hannibal for one visit, appointed by his employer after he'd been shot on duty in a robbery situation that left Will wounded and the other man dead.

Upon Hannibal's guiding hand, Will had returned for a follow up visit.

And then again, and again, and now he has the luck of seeing that curly head of hair sat across from him once a week for at least an hour, and Will has allowed himself to become comfortable with him.

Hannibal doesn't take lightly how important that is to the younger; he knows already how difficult it is for him to foster relationships with other people, often speaking of socialization as more of a chore than a human need. His affection towards Hannibal feels hard earned, though Will doesn't know just how heavy his guidance played in making them this way.

"I look forward to seeing you next week and hearing if anything interesting has come of your night out," Hannibal stands, leading Will to the patient's exit. He offers him the coat he'd taken when Will had entered, and instead of taking it from him, he extends his arm to allow Hannibal to slip the garment over his body. A jolt of pleasure shocks through Hannibal's spine.

"I'm sure that won't be a very long conversation, Hannibal," Will smiles, cocking his head as Hannibal grabs for his keys and pulls his own coat on, "are you leaving for the day?"

Hannibal nods, locking the front entrance door, "I've taken a half day today, yes, for the sake of a much awaited father-daughter day."

Will's face says it all — his eyes go big and sweet, looking at Hannibal in the exact light he'd meant to paint himself in. Smiling, Will ducks his head and looks to the ground, "that's really nice. What are your plans with her?"

Bring her home, feed her soup and keep her fever down.

"Oh, she's at quite the fun age where I'm sure there will be fingernail polish and at least one movie about a princess," he shrugs, following Will into the chill of the parking lot, snowy wind prickling at his face. He reaches around Will and tugs the hood of his coat up over his head, and there is no question in his eyes when he looks at Hannibal again.

"You said she's three?" He asks, squinting against the glare of the blaring white snow berms in the center of the parking lot. "That's a good age, they can talk and walk and tell you what's wrong. And they're so cute, then, all big eyes full of curiosity."

"Your endearment towards children betrays your youth," Hannibal jokes, walking Will towards his car. "The problem is that she's learned how susceptible one is to fall for a pouted lip."

"And when you say one," Will grins, eyes rolling playfully, "I didn't take you for the softie."

"I think a lot about me would surprise you, Will," he takes great enjoyment in his own secrets, nudging Will gently as they walk. "There are many sides to each person."

"You're just always so serious," he shrugs, "can't imagine you painting little fingernails and braiding hair."

“I’m quite good at both,” Hannibal teases, winking down at Will as they arrive at the younger’s car. “Perhaps one day you’ll meet her. You would understand very quickly it’s difficult to deny her of much.”

“I would like that,” Will leans against his car door, fishing for his keys inside his pocket. “Don’t know how that would work, what with our relationship—”

“Our friendship,” Hannibal corrects, delighting in Will’s pinkened cheeks. “You may still see me as a professional, but I’ve told you that when we meet now it’s less and less about that every time.”

“And what is it about?” Will asks, and Hannibal knows why he’s asking — knows the mixed signals he’s been leaving for Will to pick up.

“Of course I like to know that you are perfectly capable of protecting the city and that anything that may deter you from doing so will be talked through with me,” Hannibal says, choosing his words very carefully. “However, I also quite enjoy our conversations and think, beyond the severity of our first meeting, we should continue on as we are. If anything else were to happen in the line of duty, you would surely be sent to a psychiatrist. I’d like to make sure if that happened, it would be myself.”

Big blue eyes look up at Hannibal like he’s said the right thing, but of course he already knew that.

Will licks his chapped lips and nods, agreeing, “that sounds like good enough reasoning, Doctor.”

“Hannibal,” he corrects, adding a fake scold to his tone, tsking at Will, “be sure to drive safely tonight, the forecast is calling for more snow.”

“Yeah,” Will nods, blinking and flushed and far too gorgeous than a person has any right to be. “Yeah, of course, s’not like I’m gonna be drinking and driving,” he points to the badge that Hannibal knows is underneath his coat, and he’s endeared by it all too much. “I’ll save all my interesting stories for you if there are any.”

“I will anticipate them greatly,” Hannibal grins, starting to back away, “good seeing you, Will.”

“You too,” he waves a hand towards him and then fumbles with his keys, dropping them to the pavement and swearing under his breath as he bends to grab them.

Hannibal of course watches from his peripheral vision before climbing into his own car, satisfied with Will’s visit and ready to go pick up his daughter.

↞ ↞ ↞

Will does in fact, end up meeting Mischa at a *chance encounter* at the grocery store later that same week — her slight cold having passed, Hannibal thinks the idea of introducing Will to his daughter could *only* help him in the long run, and better to start early.

“Sweetheart,” Hannibal speaks softly to her in the seat of the cart, “would you like a treat?”

It does go against everything Hannibal believes in, but it’s for the greater good.

“Yes!” She cheers, raising her arms up to be lifted from the cart. He props her on his hip and points down the aisle where Will Graham is currently standing in front of a display of sweats.

“Go on down there and pick something you like, I’ll be right behind you.”

With that, he sets her down to the linoleum tile where she takes off, snow boots *clopping* down the row of deserts that Hannibal never lets her indulge in — he would much rather bake something himself for her, so he knows exactly what she’s eating.

But, for Will Graham, he will allow a box of artificial cookies into the pantry.

He follows behind her slowly, watching as she jolts to a stop near Will — she turns and looks towards Hannibal, either nervous of the stranger or just to make sure he’s not left her.

She turns away, eyes scanning the pictures on the boxes she’s never allowed, and Hannibal arrives behind her, making sure his voice is loud enough to be heard by Will just to her other side.

“Have you chosen your treat, darling?” He asks.

Will turns immediately, just as he anticipated he would.

“Dr. Lecter?” He asks, dropping a box of Oreos into his cart as he turns to face Hannibal better. He looks down, to the little blond head between them and then back up to meet his gaze.

“Oh, hello Will,” he smiles, feigning surprise and being sure to pitch his voice appropriately.

“Small world,” Will jokes, looking down to Mischa, “is this your daughter?”

“Yes,” Hannibal pushes his cart out of the way and kneels down to her level, gently turning her to face Will, “Mischa, can you introduce yourself to Mr. Graham?”

She slowly peels her eyes away from the sweets, peering up at Will with her big, auburn eyes. “Hello, Mr. Graham. I’m Mischa and I’m three years old.” Three stubby fingers raise, showing off her age in a way that Hannibal himself finds endearing — only in his own child, though. Other children do little to warm his heart.

“Wow,” Will’s eyebrows raise, exaggerated. “It’s very nice to meet you, Mischa. You don’t

have to call me Mr. Graham, you can just call me Will."

She looks towards Hannibal, eyes on his profile as she decides if this is right — Hannibal had instructed her to call him Mr. Graham, so being told otherwise needs a double check.

He grins, standing up and bringing her with him to settle on his hip again while she looks skeptical.

Will laughs, looking between the two of them, "your Daddy calls me Will, too, I promise it's okay."

"Okay," she decides, turning her head back towards the cookies on the shelf, losing interest in the conversation altogether.

"She's prioritizing a treat over holding conversation," Hannibal sighs, watching his daughter look over all of her options now that she's being held up higher.

"Can't blame her," Will shrugs, propping his foot up on the base of his cart. "How have you been?"

Hannibal knows he can't allow his delight to show outwardly on his face, but he feels it all the same. Will, one of the most intelligent people he's met, stepping into his carefully planned traps.

"Quite well, actually," Hannibal sets his daughter back on the ground, allowing her to freely move. "Did you decide to go out with your friends the other night?"

Will's cheeks go more pink than usual, and Hannibal notices immediately, curiosity ringing in his head.

"Yeah," Will shrugs, eyes flickering to Mischa. "It went okay — I'm sure we'll talk about it during my next appointment."

"Of course," Hannibal wants to talk about it *now,* but holds himself back from pressing the way he wants to, "Mischa, you must pick something today, we can't move into the grocery store while we wait on a decision."

"Daddy," she tugs on his slacks, pointing to a shelf she can't reach, "that one?"

"What does it say?"

Her eyes squint, and it's like Hannibal is watching her brain work. *"Ssh* — no, *ch-ip-s ah-hoy.* Chips Ahoy?"

"Very good," Hannibal grabs for the box of chocolate chip cookies, handing it to her so she can be the one to place it in the cart — it's her favorite part of shopping.

"You're very smart," Will says, looking down at her seriously, "who taught you how to

read?"

Mischa goes all prideful and sweet, batting her eyelashes at Will, "my Daddy did."

"What do you say when you receive a compliment?" Hannibal prompts.

"Thank you, Mr. Will!" She smiles, all little teeth and squinting eyes, terribly cute.

"Oh," Will looks back up at Hannibal, shakes his head with a smile of his own, "oh, how do you say no to that ever?"

"With great practice," Hannibal winks, taking in the way Will looks more flushed the longer they speak. "Usually, I have no problems being a stern, guiding figure, though if someone is to test that about me," his eyes roll down to his daughter who is currently clutching a pack of cookies to her chest while she looks at other options. "My money would be on her."

"Can't say I blame you," he shrugs, looking fondly at the little girl, "I think the hardest part of being a parent would be being the responsible one all the time."

This likely stems from Will's less than desirable childhood and his need to please, but Hannibal only smiles softly at him; the grocery store cookie aisle isn't the place to bring up child trauma.

"I should let you guys go," Will smiles, crouching down and telling Mischa, very seriously, "it was lovely to meet you, Mischa."

And Mischa, his darling little girl, ever unpredictable, bats her eyelashes up at Hannibal and asks, "maybe Mr. Will can come home and play with me?"

This has them both laughing — Will surely endeared and Hannibal ready to buy his daughter the entire shelf of treats.

"Oh, darling, while I'm sure Will would love to spend time with you, we've got to finish our shopping and so does he."

"It sounds like a blast, though," Will adds, holding up an outstretched pinky, "some other time?"

She cocks her head at his hand, confused.

Smiling Will grabs for her much smaller hand and helps her pinky stick out as well, bringing them together, "it's called a pinky-promise. You can't break 'em."

"Oh," she curls her little finger around Will's, bouncing a bit in place, "Mr. Will promises?"

Hannibal could explode, because this is going far better than anticipated.

"'Course I do, little lady."

When Hannibal has to scoop Mischa back up into her seat in the cart and Will is waving at them both, he presses a kiss to her pouting cheek.

“When do I see him more?” She asks, eyebrows very serious.

“Why?” Hannibal asks, pushing the two of them away from Will despite the way he’d like to stick close to him. “You want to be his friend?”

“Maybe I can marry him when I get big,” she shrugs, acting as though she’s indifferent — truly, painfully cute.

“Well, we’ll see about that.”

↞ ↞ ↞

Hannibal had a few basic steps to continue to endear Will Graham to his daughter, thus separating them further and further away from a usual *doctor-patient* situation, but now that he’s started it, it feels like he’s waiting for the right opportunities to fall in his lap.

Thankfully, sometimes the universe rewards those who wait — Will had to cancel his weekly appointment at the last minute because he was called in to stay late at work, so he’s gone over a week without seeing him now.

With this in mind, Hannibal wonders the best way he can see Will outside of his next appointment and make sure that he’s consistently filling in the parts of Will’s life that he needs to.

The snow that has been piling up all day is coming down harder now and Hannibal has already seen a plethora of news reports filled with car accidents on the highway, most of which people who drove right off the road due to the ice.

He considers canceling the rest of his appointments for the evening, knowing it will take an absurd amount of time to get to Mischa’s school, but realizes that perhaps, there’s a better solution.

After his last appointment of the day, he pulls his phone out and dials Will’s phone number. He answers on the third ring, obviously confused.

“Will,” he pitches his voice to sound worried — frantic, almost. “I’m so sorry to be bothering you—”

“What’s wrong?” He asks immediately, and Hannibal finds himself smiling through his performance.

“I’m— well, I’m on the highway to go pick up Mischa from school and there’s quite a few accidents blocking the road, we’re almost at a standstill—”

“You weren’t hit?” Will asks, sounding far more worried than Hannibal anticipated.

“No, no, I’m just worried because her school closes in half an hour and I'm still so far away. I know perhaps I shouldn’t have, but my mind went to you first, because she seemed to enjoy you at the grocery store— obviously, if you’re working or busy—”

“I can go get her,” Will says immediately, and Hannibal hears rustling on the other end of the phone. “I'm just sitting at home. Send me the address, I know I’m way closer to town than your office is— I just won’t take the highway.”

“Are you sure?” Hannibal asks, already typing the address into a message for Will, “I do not mean to trouble you.”

“I would pick her up and drive her to you if I had a car seat, Hannibal,” Will scoffs, “really, send me the address, I’ll be there way before you. I can sit with her— shit, I’ll play in the snow and keep her mind busy while you get to us.”

“You’re a lifesaver, Will,” Hannibal sighs, sending the message. He leans back in his office chair, looking out the window as snow falls in thick clumps. “I’ll call her teacher and let her know you’re allowed to pick her up and I will be there as soon as I can.”

“I’ll see you there,” Will says, a door closing softly. “Drive safe, Hannibal.”

And then he hangs up, before Hannibal can wish him the same. He calls Mischa’s teacher and relays the same lie he’d told Will, giving him permission to pick her up. Then, without a rush in the world, he locks up his office and heads towards his car.

↠ ↠ ↠

When Will arrives at the extravagant preschool, there’s only one car left in the parking lot so he rushes hastily to the front door to yank it open — it doesn’t budge, and Will notices a keypad next to the door indicating there is some kind of code to be let in that Hannibal hadn’t given him.

Unsure what else to do, he pulls his glove down, raises a fist and knocks against the thick wood. It opens as he’s readjusting the glove over his fingers, revealing an older man in a suit that Hannibal wouldn’t be caught dead in.

“Can I help you?” He asks.

“I’m here for Mischa Lecter,” Will says, shivering in the cold. He tightens his scarf around his neck. “Her father asked me to come get her, my name is Will Graham.”

The man cautiously lets Will enter the little lobby area where he can see Mischa coloring at one of the tables by herself.

“Hey,” Will calls out, and her little blond head snaps up.

Forgetting the picture she’s working on, she stands and hurries over to Will in an excited flurry of her red and white school uniform.

“Mr. Will!” She cheers, holding her arms out for Will to pick her up — he’s surprise by the immediate trust she has in him, but figures that’s how kids are and that Hannibal must have told her that he’s trustworthy.

It feels nice to be needed.

He scoops her up by her underarms and settles her on his hip where he smiles and asks, “did you hear your Daddy’s stuck in traffic? He asked if I could come play with you while he tries to get here.”

“Wow,” she says, brown eyes going big — she looks more like Hannibal up close. She shares his eyes and the dramatic cut of his cheekbones, though hers are covered in a sweet layer of baby fat. “You’re gonna color with me?”

Will shakes his head, “no, the schools gonna close so we can go play outside. There’s a park a few blocks over that looked like it had *perfect* snowman making snow.”

Her little legs kick excitedly, and Will sets her down on her shoeless feet, “where’s your shoes?”

“We take ‘em off after recess so the floors stay clean! I go get them!”

“Alright,” Will calls back, leaning on the open doorway leading into the lobby. The man from before comes out from behind the office glass with a sticky note in hand.

“I need to see your ID before you can take her,” he says, and while it makes sense, Will isn’t a fan of how *rude* he makes the request sound.

He offers it up easily, though it’s clear the little girl knows him well enough to be excited to see him, and the man scrutinizes it for about thirty seconds before giving it back to Will.

“How do you know Hannibal?” He asks, and Will’s had just about enough of the glare this guy is aiming at him.

Not quite at liberty to say something as stupid as, *he’s my therapist,* Will squares his shoulders and meets the man’s eyes despite not wanting to. “We’re friends.”

“Mhm,” he says, crumpling up the sticky note. “Will you be picking her up often enough to be added to the list?”

Will wants to spit back *yes, add me to the fucking list,* but it isn't his call to make.

"He got caught in traffic and I could get here before you closed. I don't know if he'll want me to get her again," he replies honestly, watching Mischa run back into the room with her boots in hand.

"Mr. Will, should I wear my snow pants?"

"Yes," Will nods, smiling as she drops the boots and runs back in the direction she came from, "if you need help bring them here!"

"I suppose I'll talk to Mr. Lecter about add—"

"Dr. Lecter," Will corrects, offering a forced smile.

"Yes, well," he turns without finishing whatever he was going to say, and for that Will is grateful.

He helps Mischa with the snaps on her snow pants and then makes sure the cuff covers her boots is pulled over them so snow won't sneak in and freeze her feet while they wait. Standing up and reaching a hand down, he asks, "you ready to rock 'n roll, kiddo?"

She jumps, hopping her way towards the door and dragging Will along — he pays the man in the office no mind at all, forgetting the irritation he'd felt for the time being because he's got a tiny person to look after.

They walk hand in hand to the park just around the corner and Will texts Hannibal their location before slipping his phone safely into his pocket to help Mischa make a snowman properly.

By the time Hannibal shows up, Will's fingers are numb and he's chasing a three year old around a small family of snow-people, her giggles breaking through the silence of the empty park and mingling in with the pounding of Will's heart.

"You're too fast!" Will pauses, catching his breath with his hands on his knees. Mischa turns to look over her shoulder and her eyes are alight with mischief. She grins, and then charges, tackling Will into a pile of snow until she's sat atop his chest giggling and red cheeked.

Will is laughing too — that's how Hannibal finds them, stepping up to the mess the two of them make and looking down at them with an almost smile stretched over his face. Hannibal never really smiles, but this feels pretty close.

"Are you having fun?" He asks, and Mischa gasps, tilting her head back to meet her father's eyes.

"Daddy!" She cheers, jumping off of Will to cling to his leg, snow pants imprinting wetness against probably very expensive slacks.

Hannibal offers a hand down to Will to help him up from where the snow is currently melting under the collar of his coat and chilling his skin to the bone — his scarf is being used for the *Daddy Snowman,* a just cause that he couldn't argue against if you paid him to.

"I see she's made sure to thoroughly tire you out, Will," he jokes, warm fingers curling around Will's numb ones as he helps him to his feet. "I've got a blanket in the car you may use — you look like you're moments away from becoming a snowman yourself."

Will grins, shaking the snow out of the back of his hair as he looks down to Mischa, "you played dirty, I was catching my breath."

"Too slow," she giggles, hiding her face behind Hannibal's leg.

"We had a good time," he says, looking to Hannibal now and feeling a bit silly next to the man in his impeccable clothes and perfectly styled hair. "She's gonna sleep good tonight."

Hannibal nods, waving his hand towards the parking lot where his Bentley is waiting, "I'll drive you back to your car."

"Oh, no," Will flushes, sneakily taking his scarf back from the snowman and shaking it out a bit. Too cold to wear, but he doesn't want to go without it forever. "I don't think ruining your very fancy seats with my wet clothes is a great idea."

"That's why I've got the blanket," he wraps an arm around Will's back, gently guiding him towards the car. His other hand is holding Mischa's, leading them both together — Will expects him to drop his hold on him after they start walking together, but it stays firmly pressing through his coat against the small of his back.

At the car, Will helps get Mischa ready to get inside, taking her hat and gloves and shaking the snow from them while Hannibal bags her snow pants and coat, exchanging them for a sweater that is apparently car seat safe. Will was unaware that kids couldn't wear coats in the car anymore.

"Mr. Will!" She calls, just before Hannibal closes the door to incase her in the warmth of the car. Will ducks his head down to see her rosy cheeks and bright eyes, finds himself smiling.

"What's up, sweetpea?"

"Your pinky!" She reaches her own out, and Will copies her, confused but fond.

"What are we promising now?"

"Oh," she looks puzzled, then shakes her head, "because you kept your promise and played with me?"

Heart warm, Will nods, agreeing. "Oh, we're just sealing the deal? That's a good call, Mischa."

She giggles and releases his pinky, then waves her cute, chubby hand at him while Hannibal closes the door.

“Pardon my language, but your kid is the fuckin’ cutest,” he says as soon as little ears can’t hear, and Hannibal does smile then — a wider one than Will has seen before.

His voice is amused as he opens the passenger side door, pulling out a fancy, fluffy blanket and wrapping it around Will’s shoulders for him as he shoves the door closed with his hip. “She’s taken to you very easily.”

“I’m glad,” Will admits, realizing his teeth are chattering and the blanket is a little blessing that smells like Hannibal.

“I think you may be her first crush, really,” he says, and Will can’t help but laugh. “She asked if she was allowed to marry you the other day.”

“Oh,” Will clutches his heart, “adorable. A bit out of my appropriate age range, but very cute.”

“A bit?” Hannibal grins, and Will can sense he’s thinking something by the way he’s looking at him — he’ll never know, though, because after a short moment, Hannibal is shaking his head, “I truly appreciate you coming to look after her. I would love to thank you with a dinner at my home whenever you’re free.”

“Is that allowed?” Will asks, though the idea of spending time in Hannibal’s house, eating Hannibal’s food, enjoying his company with the addition of the very cute little girl he’s just spent an hour with sounds a bit like a dream. He tells himself not to attach; always the person to show more interest than he receives.

“You’re the police officer,” Hannibal jokes, and Will has to duck his face to the ground so he can’t see that it actually makes him smile. “I don’t see an issue with anything. Do you?”

And Will should probably say something about how Hannibal is supposed to be a professional person to him — someone he is meant to see weekly and without making any sort of personal bonds with to help him work out his feelings.

Instead, Will looks into Hannibal’s eyes for once and decides that dinner couldn’t hurt. So he shrugs, “no. No issue.”

And the smile Hannibal aims at him makes it feel like that was the right choice.

↞ ↞ ↞

Mischa is doing her best to avoid bedtime, and Hannibal knows it’s because she’s overtired

and overstimulated from the schedule change and spending time with Will after school, and the fact that he purposely let her stay up over an hour past her usual bedtime — it's his own fault, which he reminds himself when he feels his patience slipping.

Luckily, it's also his planned hunting night, which will align well with the dose of melatonin he'd given her after bath time, melted in with a bit of apple juice.

"Sweetheart, we're all done," he says, offering his hand to the toddler in the hopes that she will give up on jumping between the couches in the sitting room. She looks at Hannibal's hand, as if deciding for herself if she's going to make the right call or push some boundaries that have already been set.

Then, she bounds herself to the recliner and Hannibal has no choice but to just grab her and carry her up the stairs.

"I know you're having fun, but we need to pick out your pajamas and a story to read," he says calmly while she giggles and kicks her small legs in an effort to be set down again. The hooded frog towel she's wearing slides her lower as she struggles, but Hannibal's grip is tight enough to not drop her.

Soon enough the pill will kick in and she'll settle down, but for now he knows it will be a fight trying to get her to lay down and listen to a story.

Inside her bedroom, he sets his daughter on the plush carpet and gently closes the door, "go pick the story you want, darling."

She hops her way over to the bookcase, making little frog sounds as she goes, and Hannibal turns to her dresser to grab a set of pajamas and make sure the hidden camera in her rabbit stuffed animal is switched to *on*.

If there's two things in the world that are true, the first is that Hannibal loves his daughter and would do anything to keep her safe.

The second is that nothing could make him give up his dietary habits, even if he's had to put his tableaus on hold until she's old enough to be alone for an entire night at a time.

Three is certainly too young to be left alone in a home at all, but Hannibal has had to compromise enough after eating Mischa's mother, and thinks a weekly slip of a pill for him to be out for his personal *grocery shopping* is just something that comes with the territory of being a father now.

He helps Mischa into cozy yellow, polka dotted pajamas with the attached feet, zipping it up to her neck while she giggles and tries to squirm away from him all the while. Eventually, she settles in his lap for him to brush out her tangly, wet hair — he knows it's only because she enjoys this part of the bedtime routine, almost always asking Hannibal to braid it for her so it can be curly in the mornings.

Tonight, though, her eyelids are drooping the longer he combs her hair, being careful not to

tug or scrape against her scalp. The pill has clearly taken, and Hannibal looks to his watch to check the time as she starts nodding off.

9:37.

Mischa has never woken up before while he's been out getting their weekly meat supply, but he likes to return quick enough that if the pill wears off and she awakes for any reason, that he'll be home for her to run to — she's still prone to childish nightmares that leave her crying out for him, too scared to move out of her bed but wanting her father for comfort.

With this in mind, Hannibal gently picks her up and tucks her into bed. Her eyelids flutter, fingers curling in his shirt as he tries to pull the covers over her lax body.

"Daddy," she mumbles, eyebrows pinching, "m'story?"

"We read it already," he lies, pressing a kiss to her chubby cheek. He pets the other one, lulling her properly under with the familiar touch and a soft hum, "goodnight, darling."

She makes a little sound in her throat and pulls one of her stuffies close to her chest. Hannibal makes sure the blankets are pulled up to her chin, and watches her for a few more minutes to make sure she's fully asleep.

Then, and only then, he stands, double checks the hidden camera and her nightlight and flicks off the overhead one, and gently closes the door behind himself.

He's got about four hours to be back home.

↞ ↞ ↞

Hannibal finds his target where he knew he would — it's harder to track now that he has Mischa, but he's still efficient enough to do it properly without being caught.

His pig comes out of a bar for a smoke against the building. Friday night means it's riskier; the bar is obviously more packed, which makes for more witnesses if he were to fuck up.

Hannibal doesn't fuck up often enough for that to be a real concern.

He slides up to the man casually, who looks at him with a predictable glaze in his eyes that comes from the relaxation of alcohol. Cocking his head, the man asks, "do I know you?"

Hannibal smiles, shaking his head. He finds it even more disrespectful that he has the audacity to not remember Hannibal when they'd last seen one another; when Hannibal had been a witness to him berating a retail employee for not being quick enough for his liking.

Of course, Hannibal agrees that poor service should be punished, but the man had only been

waiting a few moments when he started to insult the poor girl on the other side of the counter, who had blond hair and shimmering eyes that swam with tears the longer she had been yelled at.

If she reminded him of his daughter, that's neither here nor there. Hannibal planned to make sure this man wouldn't have the ability to belittle any more teenage girls likely working their very first job.

Simple enough to drag the man away from the safety of the bar with a simple lie, *"do you know who owns the blue Honda? I've parked next to it and believe I may have scraped it."*

Outrage had flashed in his eyes, throwing the cigarette to the ground and stomping it out — he follows Hannibal towards their cars, truly parked right next to each other and in the darkness of the unlit parking lot. Lucky that this man frequents an establishment that can't afford working security systems or proper lighting; makes it quite easy for Hannibal to lead him to the back of his car, pointing towards the bumper of the already beaten up Honda.

As he ducks down to see what Hannibal's done to his car — *nothing,* Hannibal swiftly unlocks his trunk already lined with plastic wrap, and brings a rock down against the side of his head, knocking him out immediately. With that, he stuffs the man inside his trunk and latches it closed before he can be seen.

Four hours had been generous — he's parked back inside his garage in only two, mostly all of it from the drive, hauling the body to the basement while Mischa slumbers away upstairs in her princess themed room in her footie pajamas.

He wishes terribly that he could arrange this man properly for the public; he knows it's been years since the ripper has truly ripped and there's an ache inside of him that throbs with want to start it up again whenever he slaughters another pig. He hasn't had a single article written about him in so long, he's almost forgotten what it feels like to have so much attention on him at once.

Not yet, though.

He can't risk it when Mischa is too little to understand why they may need to suddenly run off somewhere else in case it was ever traced back to him. She loves her school and her friends, and as much as that need is carving a hole inside of him, he can't do that to her now.

Almost just as importantly, he can't do that now with Will Graham newly in his life. There's too much potential in the young police officer to throw it all away just to scratch an itch right now.

So, he sets about strapping the man to the table in his soundproof basement and propping his phone up so he can see Mischa asleep in her bed — just in case she wakes up.

And then he gets to work.

↞ ↞ ↞

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!